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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, TAIWAN  
ELECTIONS, BURMESE PLIGHT

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage December 21 on the Legislative Yuan ratifying the government's 2008 budget and the amendment to Taiwan's National Communications Commission Act on Thursday; the controversy over the voting format in the legislative elections in January 2008; and speculation on the possibility of more U.S. senior officials talking publicly against to Taiwan's UN referendum. The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" ran a banner headline on page five that said "[DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh] Hsieh: [I have] Heard [U.S. President George W.] Bush Also Will Go into Action to Oppose [Taiwan's] UN Referendum."

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a commentary in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said that the circumstances in South Korea and Taiwan are different, therefore people should not make comparisons between the two. A commentary in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" suggested that the KMT learn from South Korean president-elect Lee Myung-bak to win the legislative election in January 2008 first. The pro-independence, English-language daily "Taiwan News" discussed lessons that Taiwan can learn from the South Korean presidential election. The conservative, pro-unification, English-language daily "China Post" discussed the parallels between the presidential election in South Korea and the upcoming election in Taiwan. With regard to Taiwan's UN referendum, a commentary in the pro-unification "United Daily News" criticized President Chen Shui-bian's previous rhetoric that "the UN referendum will change the world." The editorial of the pro-independence, English-language daily "Taipei Times" criticized the "dirty tricks" of the KMT. Regarding the situation in Burma, Dr. Cynthia Maung had an interview with the "Taipei Times" on Burmese political exiles' plight. End Summary.

### 13. South Korean Presidential Election

#### A) "Korean Wave, Cold Wave [Current], and Non-Standard!"

A senior political columnist Hu Wen-hui wrote in his column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation 720,000] (12/21):

"... Taiwan will hold its presidential election in March of next year. This inevitably draws comparisons with the South Korean presidential election. But the two countries' [sic] national conditions, political structure and circumstances in the international community are very different. It is not possible to transplant the South Korean experience [into Taiwan]. ..."

#### B) "Seeing the Rabbit and Forget About the Tiger"

Columnist Antonio Chiang wrote in his column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (12/21)

"... If the KMT is confident in itself, it should learn from [South Korean president-elect] Lee Myung-bak's strategy of making

concessions in order to gain advantages. It [the KMT] should not get entangled with the DPP on technical, trivial things such as "one-step" or "two-step" voting formats. [The KMT] should do its utmost to win people's minds, sprint for votes and seats in the legislative election [in January 2008], and leave other issues for after the [legislative] election. Win the people's minds first, get enough seats second, and then there is no need to be afraid of political 'dirty tricks'. ..."

#### C) "What Korean Polls Mean for Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language daily "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (12/21):

"... [DPP presidential candidate Frank] Hsieh and the DPP must not ignore the message sent by [South Korean President] Roh's defeat of the need to more seriously offer clear and robust policy directions, especially in the fields of economics, social welfare and sustainable development. ..."

"[KMT presidential candidate] Ma's calls for faster and virtually unconditional lifting of economic channels with the hostile People's Republic of China, combined with his own weak-kneed stance toward Beijing, may also backfire, just as did Roh's 'sunshine' policy [toward North Korea], in the face of anxiety among workers, farmers, and small enterprises of the impact on their employment and business prospects of an 'open door' to a flood of cheap imports into Taiwan and an exodus of Taiwan capital and jobs to the mainland. ..."

#### D) "Impact of Presidential Election in South Korea"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language daily "The China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/21):

"... There are marked parallels between this presidential election ELECTIONS, BURMESE FLIGHT

and the one that is to take place here in Taiwan next March. The results of the Korean election, therefore, deserve the attention of the people here. ..."

"The DPP is more concerned about how it can retain its position as the ruling party. There is nothing wrong with this, as how to stay in power is a concern of every ruling party. But the DPP has hampered Taiwan's rapid growth by focusing its attention exclusively on political goals. ..."

"Taiwan and South Korea, along with Hong Kong and Singapore, have been referred to as the 'Four Little Tigers of Asia.' But Taiwan, which used to be the frontrunner among the 'tigers,' has fallen behind the others. This miserable state of affairs will certainly continue unless the island's voters are wise enough to choose a leader who can effectively revitalize the economy and promote peace in the Taiwan Strait."

### 4. Taiwan Elections

#### A) "A-Bian Wants to Change the Whole World?"

A column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (12/21):

"... Chen Shui-bian said that the UN referendum can 'make the whole world change.' If it is only to deceive himself as well as others, everyone might as well put up with it for more than one hundred days until [Chen Shui-bian] steps down. But if he really wants to take this as an excuse to change the 'status quo' across the [Taiwan] Strait with a further attempt to challenge the peace in East Asia, and even the global order, then it will be a calamity!"

#### B) "KMT's Election Strategy Is All Lies"

The pro-independence, English-language daily "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/21):

"... The images of a 'dirty' DPP and a 'power-crazed' Chen are simply the product of the pro-unification media and the KMT's propaganda machine. The KMT has decades of experience in control and

manipulation of the media and remains extremely adept at it.

"For an example of how these two powerful institutions work in tandem to minimize bad press for the KMT, one need only look at what happened when news broke that Siew had told Burghardt that the KMT's insistence on two-step voting would mean the DPP's UN referendum would fail. Evidence that it Q working to suppress Taiwan internationally in line with China's goals is not something the KMT wants occupying the headlines. ..."

#### 15. Burmese Plight

"Maung Discusses the Plight of Political Exiles"

The pro-independence, English-language daily "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] had an interview with Dr. Cynthia Maung last week when Maung came to Taiwan to receive the 2007 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award (12/21):

"... In an interview with the Taipei Times last Friday, Maung compared statelessness among the Burmese in Thailand to Taiwanese striving for statehood, saying that "the main problem in Burma is the military dictatorship ruling the country.

"'One interesting thing I saw in Taiwan is that Taiwan also faces the same challenge. Until now Taiwan is not recognized by the United Nations [UN] as one nation ... But because of freedom and democracy, Taiwan has made lots of improvement,' she said.

"'The difference between Burma and Taiwan is that you are on your own land and you have a democratic leadership ... But for the Burmese, they have to live in other countries as illegal and stateless people, and there are always constant threats of arrest and deportation...'"

YOUNG